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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0489
INFO RUEHZN/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHFT/AMCONSUL FRANKFURT 3077

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TALLINN 000060

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP; PLEASE PASS TO KCC: POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION
MANAGERS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CMGT](#) [KFRD](#) [ASEC](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [EN](#)

SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - TALLINN: 1ST QUARTER 2008

REF: A) 07 TALLINN 938 B) 07 TALLINN 759 C)07 STATE 83571

11. COUNTRY CONDITIONS: Estonia's economy grew rapidly in 2007, approximately 7.3 percent, albeit at a slower pace than expected. Growth is predicted to fall to 4.3 percent in FY 2008. Acute labor shortages exist in the country both as a result of declining birth rates and outward migration of Estonia's labor-pool outsources itself to other parts of the EU. Unemployment for calendar year 2007 was estimated at 5.2 percent nationally, but varied considerably from region to region, with higher unemployment notable in the Russian-speaking, Eastern parts of the country. In most Estonian families, both husband and wife are employed.

A large ethnic Russian minority (about 29%) resides in Estonia. Significant divisions between them and the Estonian majority remain, as evidenced by the disturbances that followed the GoE's decision to relocate a Soviet-era, World War II Memorial in April 2007 (reftel A). Public and GOE discussion of integration issues increased significantly immediately following the riots and the GOE is planning to launch a new integration strategy in February.

Presently, approximately 115,000 persons in Estonia are considered stateless and travel on Estonian-issued "alien passports", also known as gray passports, which accord some travel privileges to EU and Schengen countries but not the same as those guaranteed to Estonian passports. The number of stateless persons is decreasing steadily.

In 2007, 93 percent of Posts' NIV applicants held Estonian passports, 2.5 percent stateless alien passports, 3.5 percent Russian passports, and one percent passports from some other country. Estonia has issued machine-readable passports since February 2002, a photo-digitized since May 2005 and an E-passport with biometric data chip since early 2007. Alien passports are made to the same standard as the Estonian citizen passports.

The volume of Estonian travel to the United States is low, due largely to the country's small population, and the relatively small Estonian-American population in the United States. Moreover, no direct, commercial flights exist between Estonia and the United States. A weakening dollar, however, has made travel to the U.S. more attractive and affordable for Estonians.

Russian and Estonian organized crime groups exist in Estonia and members sometimes seek U.S. visas.

NB: On December 21, 2007 Estonia acceded to the Schengen area, abolishing internal controls on all land and sea borders except those with the Russian Federation. Estonia's airports will integrate into Schengen on March 30, 2008. Some GoE officials have suggested that Schengen accession lead to an increase in Estonia's TCN population.

¶2. NIV FRAUD: No significant changes from the previous fraud summary. Post continues to verify suspicious applicant-provided information using various online resources, including but not limited to Lexis-Nexis, CCD, and Estonian search mechanisms to verify personal, financial and business information. While no significant NIV fraud was detected at Post for October to December 2007, Post confirmed approximately 10 overstays using data from a 2006 upload to CLASS of 7500 L lookouts based on missing I-94 data.

¶3. IV FRAUD: To date, no fraud has been detected among IV applicants in Tallinn. Post began full IV and DV processing in May 2007.

¶4. DV FRAUD: See above regarding IV fraud.

¶5. ACS AND PASSPORT FRAUD: None detected since previous fraud summary.

¶6. ADOPTION: No change from previous fraud summary.

¶7. ASYLUM AND OTHER DHS FRAUD: As reported in (reftel B), Post recently completed processing of two VISAS-92 cases in which we noted evidence of fraud in the petitioners own asylum application to DHS.

¶8. COOPERATION WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES: December 2007 was the one-year anniversary of Post's fully automated reporting of Estonian lost and stolen passports (reftel C). During this year, the system generated 85 emails to the CA support desk with information on 5355 L/S Estonian passports.

On December 7, Consul and AFU-FSN visited Tallinn International Airport to brief airline and airport personnel on U.S. travel documents, visa fraud and identity theft.

(SBU): Estonia continues its drive to enter the Visa Waiver Program.

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A series of meetings took place between GoE and DHS officials in the first quarter of 2008, culminating in December with a signed HSPD-6 Terrorist Information Sharing Agreement.

¶9. AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN: Estonia entered Schengen on December 21, 2007 and now maintains open borders except with neighboring Russia. Airports will follow suit in March 2008. There is concern that illegal immigration into Estonia may increase as it becomes a gateway to onward passport-free travel to the rest of the EU. There is also concern that Third country nationals will try to use fraudulent Estonian travel documents to enter other Schengen countries.

¶10. STAFFING AND TRAINING: The Consular Section consists of two officers, one consular associate and two FSNs. Everyone assists with fraud prevention work as required. Both officers have completed PC-541 Fraud Prevention for Consular Managers. The Visa Assistant has recently completed PC-542 FSN Fraud Prevention.

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